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RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 0910
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 3727
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 5045
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1045
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA PRIORITY 3179
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2445
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 000423

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H PLEASE PASS TO STAFFDEL FITE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/23/2017
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [OREP](#) [NP](#)
SUBJECT: NEPAL: STAFFDEL FITE HEARS OPPORTUNITY FOR THE U.S.

REF: A. KATHMANDU 366

[1](#)B. KATHMANDU 406
[1](#)C. KATHMANDU 408

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Summary -----

[1](#)1. (C) During a visit to Kathmandu from February 20-22, Staffdel Fite heard from various interlocutors that, despite many obstacles and challenges in the months ahead, there was an opportunity for Nepal to achieve a peaceful democracy; the Staffdel also heard that additional funding would be necessary for the USG to support and influence Nepal's transition.

Violence Is Not Political Power -----

[1](#)2. (C) Dinesh Bhattarai, Joint Secretary for the UN at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stressed that the Government of Nepal (GON) was committed to the peace process. The GON had been working with the Maoists to establish an interim government, but the Maoists would not be allowed into an interim government until the arms management process was completed. Maoist behavior needed to change; violence was not an acceptable way to gain political power. The Prime Minister and the GON were committed to holding an election in June, but Bhattarai admitted that it might not be logistically possible.

U.S. and Nepal: Reliable Partners -----

[1](#)3. (C) Dr. Suresh Chalise, the Prime Minister's foreign policy advisor, thanked the Staffdel for the continued support given to the GON by the U.S. The Maoists continued to press the GON and the Prime Minister to allow their entry into an interim government as quickly as possible. Until the UN said that the arms management was complete the Maoists would not join an interim government. There were some "hiccups" in the behavior of the Maoists, and the

Ambassador's continued criticism of these transgressions had been very helpful to the GON. Chalise requested additional support from the U.S., stating that now was a time of great change in Nepal and the GON would need continued support from donor countries to help with the transition. (refs A and B)

Tough Road Ahead For The Police

14. (C) The top three concerns raised by Kishor Lama, Deputy Inspector General of the Armed Police Force (APF), and Surendra Shah, Senior Superintendent of the Nepal Police were: re-establishing police posts, improving police relations with the public, and organizing security for the up-coming election. Lama and Shah pushed for USG support for both the Nepal Police and the APF requesting specific resources, such as: riot control gear, logistical support, and investigative training. They were concerned about the ability of the security forces to enforce law and order in the country when they did not have riot control gear or crowd control training for their ranks. Lama added that the recent riots in the Terai were a "pitiful situation" for the police; with limited resources and direction the police had been unable to respond. Despite proposals forwarded to the GON by the security forces, there had been no movement on the requested resources or training.

Election Commission Needs Guidance

15. (C) The day after the Election Commission (EC) had set a deadline for agreement by the political parties, Chief Election Commissioner, Bhoj Raj Pokhrel, expressed both the EC's commitment to holding the elections in June and concern

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over the many obstacles that still remained. Without a decision by the political parties on what type of electoral system would be used in the election, the Commission remained limited in its ability to prepare for the elections or meet the June deadline (ref C). The difficult terrain of Nepal, continued voter registration issues, and a limited time frame were constraints to holding the elections in June, but the Commission had been doing everything in its power to meet the deadline. Security and election monitoring would be essential to the success of a free and fair election.

Interim Government: Nepal's Decision

16. (C) John Norris, the UN Secretary General's Special Representative's Political Advisor, briefed the Staffdel on the UN's work in Nepal and on recent political developments. The decision whether to include the Maoists in the interim government based on the findings by the UN on arms management would be made by the GON alone. The reports of Maoists abandoning their commitment and leaving the cantonments were confirmed by Norris, who added that it was a serious concern and the UN would release a strong statement condemning the combatants as quickly as possible. (Note: The UN released a statement later that same day. End Note.) In a separate meeting Subash Nemwang, Speaker of the House of Representatives, expressed concern about the Maoists abandoning their cantonments. Inclusion of the Maoists would be essential to the success of the peace process. The Staffdel asked Nemwang whether the Maoists had provided a detailed accounting to the GON for the nearly 5 million U.S. dollars that had been allocated for the cantonments. Nemwang replied that the issue would be reviewed by the interim parliament.

Maoists: A Step Ahead

17. (C) Dominic Cardy, Acting Director of the National Democratic Institute (NDI), told the Staffdel that the

Maoists were a step ahead of the other political parties in preparing for the up-coming election. The parties would likely have trouble getting out their message in the election because of a lack of involvement by the political parties at the grassroots level for many years, limited training for lower level political party members, and a divided agenda. The Maoists, meanwhile, had been "much better at negotiating than they were at fighting." NDI had been working to create an alliance for election monitoring that would include both international and domestic partners. Strong international support and involvement in the elections would be essential to ensure a free and fair election. Funds for training election monitors, providing technical assistance to the election commission and supporting public awareness and education on elections were NDI's top three requests for assistance from the U.S.

Comment

18. (C) The various interlocutors told Staffdel Fite that, despite many obstacles and challenges in the months ahead, there was a good chance for Nepal to achieve a peaceful and prosperous democracy. Now is the time for the U.S. to step up to the plate and provide the financial and moral assistance that Nepal needs to achieve its goals. The GON is in a tenuous position in the current political environment. Without active and immediate support from the international community for elections, security sector reform, and civic education, the Maoists stand a good chance of continuing to roll over the GON in pursuit of their own goals. If we want the opportunity to have a positive effect on the process in Nepal, we need to ramp up our support immediately.

MORIARTY